



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 29, 2016

Testimony in support of HB 5386- An Act Concerning Votes for Cross Endorsed Candidates

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, and Members of the GAE Committee,

My name is Lauren Olson. I am a member of the ROVAC Legislative Committee, and an 18 year Deputy Registrar of Voters from the Town of Ashford. I am here to speak in support of HB 5386. As someone who works at the polls on Election Day, and completes, with the Moderator, the Moderator's Return and Head Moderator's Returns, I have direct dealings with the unknown votes.

When the votes are read to the public at the end of the election, there is confusion about the word 'unknown'. The public thinks that votes are not correctly being counted. To eliminate the confusion, ROVAC would prefer the word "unassigned" for these cross-endorsed votes. The Registrars can then explain to the public that the voter did not assign the party to the candidate for whom they voted.

ROVAC would also like to change how "unknown" or "unassigned" votes are tallied. We would prefer the voter to be able to take a new ballot and choose under which party they want to vote for a candidate. If the voter prefers not to re-mark his ballot, he would then have the opportunity to put the ballot in the auxiliary bin and have the ballot counted by hand. The Registrars will no longer be responsible for calculating and assigning party affiliation. Voter intent will be certain! We would encourage you to include this as an addition to the bill.

Thank you for allowing this testimony, and you for considering this issue.

Lauren Olson

Deputy Registrar of Voters, Ashford
ROVAC Legislative Committee Member